

COVID-19 TESTING SUMMARY



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR
COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Division of the National Health Laboratory Service

SOUTH AFRICA WEEK 21 2020

OVERVIEW

This report summarises national laboratory testing for SARS-CoV-2, the virus causing COVID-19, in South Africa. This report is based on data collected up to 23 May 2020 (week 21 of 2020). Note: COVID-19 is the name of the disease and SARS-CoV-2 is the name of the virus.

Highlights

- In the period 1 March 2020 through 23 May 2020, 564 155 laboratory tests for SARS-CoV-2 have been conducted nationally
- Laboratory testing for SARS-CoV-2 increased week-on-week with a larger network of testing laboratories and the implementation of targeted community symptom screening and referral for testing in early April 2020. However, a decrease in testing volumes was observed in the past two weeks, likely due to the limited supply of testing kits
- Overall proportion testing positive was 4.2%. However, there has been an increase in the weekly proportion testing positive since week 18 to 7.5% in week 21 (17-23 May).
- Western Cape (17.5%) and Eastern Cape (8.8%) provinces continued to have the highest proportion testing positive in the past week
- Proportion testing positive in the past week was highest in the 20-39 and 40-59-year age groups, and was higher among females than males
- The mean turnaround time in the public sector increased from 2.5 days to 8 days from week 17 to week 21, as a result of laboratory testing backlogs



TESTS

564 155

LABORATORY TESTS HAVE
BEEN CONDUCTED NATIONALLY
FROM 1 MARCH TO 23 MAY 2020



PERSONS

20-39 YEARS

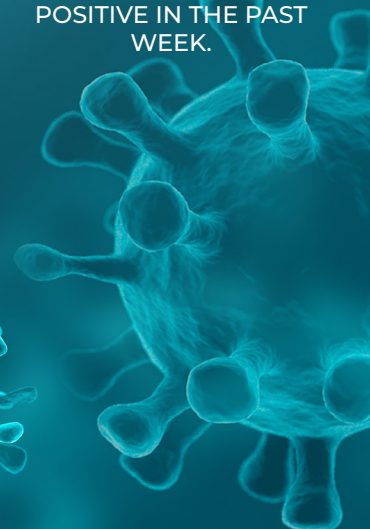
40-59 YEARS

HIGHEST PROPORTION
TESTING POSITIVE IN THE PAST
WEEK



WESTERN CAPE

HAD THE HIGHEST
PROPORTION TESTING
POSITIVE IN THE PAST
WEEK.



METHODS

Testing for SARS-CoV-2 began on 28 January 2020 at the NICD and after the first case was confirmed on 5 March 2020, testing was expanded to a larger network of private and NHLS laboratories. Laboratory testing was conducted for people meeting the case definition for persons under investigation (PUI). This definition was updated several times over the reporting period but at different times included (i) symptomatic individuals seeking testing, (ii) hospitalized individuals for whom testing was done, (iii) individuals in high-risk occupations, (iv) individuals in outbreak settings, and (v) individuals identified through community screening and testing (CST) programmes which were implemented in April 2020. CST was implemented differently in different provinces, and ranged from mass screening approaches (including asymptomatic individuals) to screening of individuals in contact with a confirmed case to targeted testing of clusters of cases. Mass screening and testing has been discontinued from the week beginning 17th May, however there may be a lag in changing practice in the provinces. Respiratory specimens were submitted to testing laboratories. Testing was performed using reverse transcriptase real-time PCR, which detects SARS-CoV-2 viral genetic material. Laboratories used any one of several in-house and commercial PCR assays to test for the presence of SARS-CoV-2 RNA. Test results were automatically fed into a data warehouse after result authorisation. We excluded specimens collected outside South Africa and duplicate test results for an individual. Date of specimen receipt in the laboratory was used when date of specimen collection was missing. Proportion testing positive (PTP) was calculated as the number of positive tests/total number of tests.

Health district and sub-district level results included only public sector data, and were mapped based on the testing facility. For these results, estimates of overall prevalence were derived using regression techniques. These estimates were then refined using the margins command in Stata to adjust the district-specific positive test prevalences for the average age profile, the average sex composition, and the average balance between clinical and CST tests across the entire public testing data for the week for a more accurate comparison of the prevalences across districts.

The report includes tests conducted between 1 March 2020 (week 10), the week when the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed, and 23 May 2020 (week 21).

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TESTING VOLUMES AND PROPORTION TESTING POSITIVE

From 1 March through 23 May 2020, 564 155 laboratory tests for SARS-CoV-2 were conducted. The number of tests conducted increased week on week to week 19, however decreased in week 20 (10-16 May) and week 21 (17-23 May). The decrease in the volume of testing conducted over the past two weeks is likely due to a limited supply of testing kits. In addition, due to backlogs in laboratory testing, all tests for samples collected in week 21 may not yet be reflected. Reduced testing volumes were observed over weekends and public holidays (Figure 1).

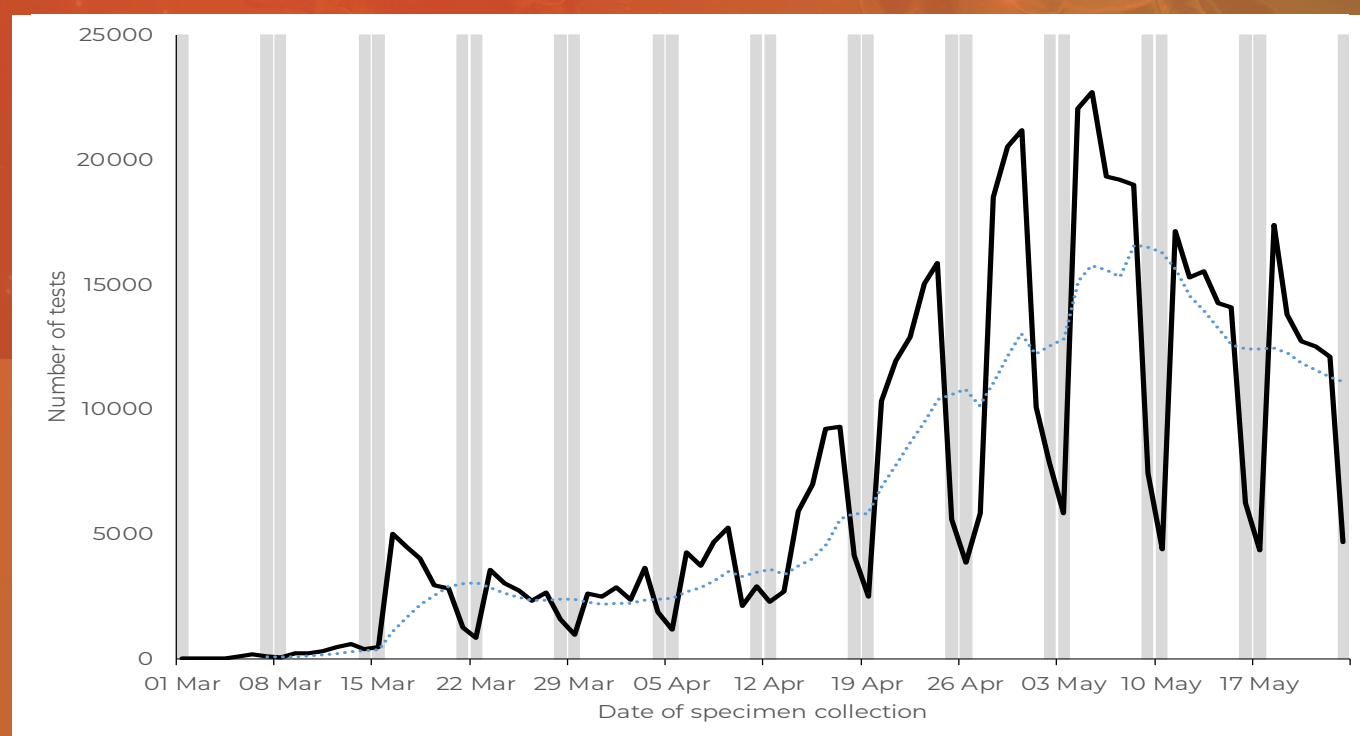


Figure 1. Number of laboratory tests conducted by date of specimen collection, South Africa, 1 March – 23 May 2020. Blue dotted line shows the 7-day moving average of the number of tests conducted. Grey bars highlight weekend days

The overall proportion testing positive from week 10 through 21 was 4.2% (Table 1). There has been an ongoing weekly increase in the proportion testing positive, from 2.7% in week 17 to 7.5% in the recent week (Figure 2).

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Table 1. Weekly number of tests conducted and positive tests, South Africa, 1 March – 23 May 2020

Week number	Week beginning	No. of tests n (%)	No. of positive tests	Proportion testing positive (%)
10	01 Mar	410 (0.1)	8	1.95
11	08 Mar	22 65 (0.4)	95	4.19
12	15 Mar	20 942 (3.7)	851	4.06
13	22 Mar	16 738 (3.0)	476	2.84
14	29 Mar	16 849 (3.0)	436	2.59
15	05 Apr	24 113 (4.3)	698	2.89
16	12 Apr	40 614 (7.2)	1 174	2.89
17	19 Apr	74 245 (13.2)	2 014	2.71
18	26 Apr	87 891 (15.6)	3 020	3.44
19	03 May	115 553 (20.5)	4 956	4.29
20	10 May	86 954 (15.4)	4 317	4.96
21	17 May	77 581 (13.8)	5 845	7.53
Total		564 155 (100)	23 890	4.23

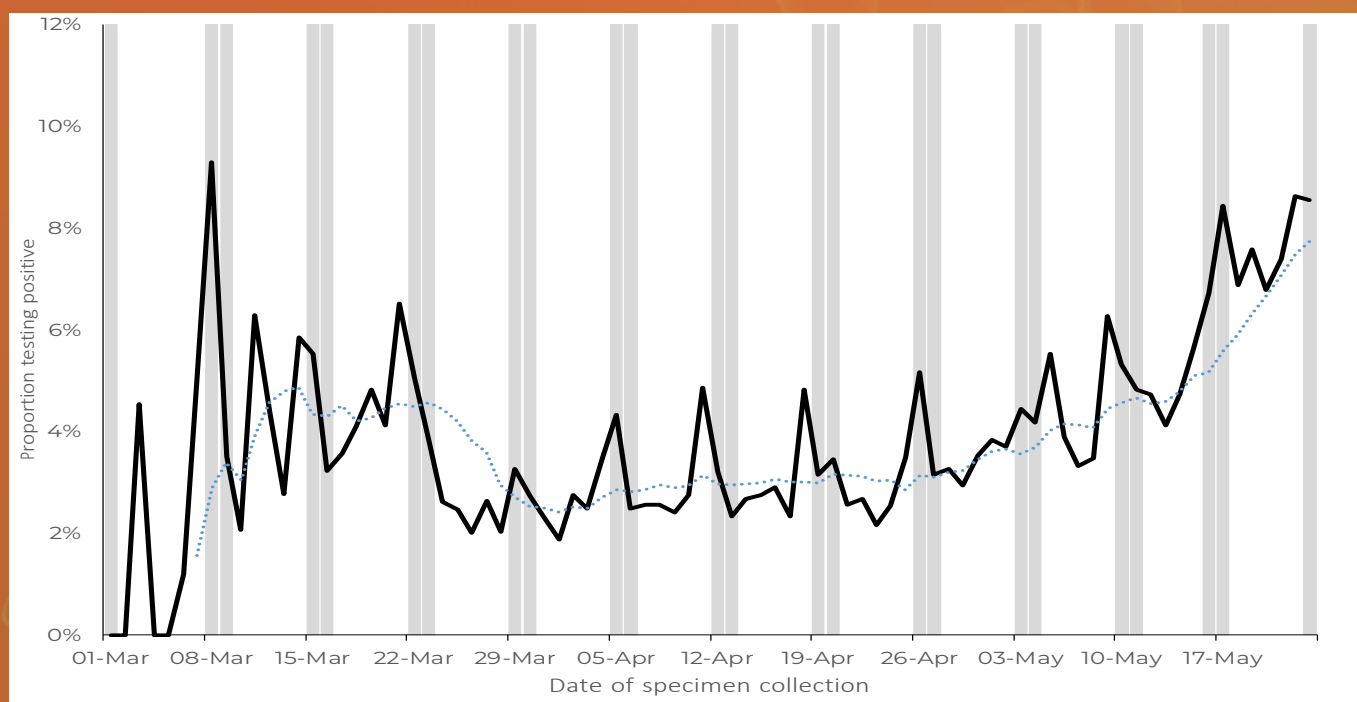


Figure 2. Proportion of laboratory tests positive for SARS-CoV-2 by date of specimen collection, South Africa, 1 March – 23 May 2020. Blue dotted line shows the 7-day moving average of the number of tests conducted. Grey bars highlight weekend days

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TESTING IN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS

From 1 March through 23 May, 297 977 laboratory tests were conducted in public sector laboratories, with 4.5% testing positive. Over this same period, private sector laboratories conducted 266 178 tests, with 4.0% testing positive (Table 2). Overall the public sector has conducted 52.8% of tests and accounted for 55.6% of cases. The proportion of tests conducted in public sector laboratories increased from week 12 (6.7%) through week 18 (74.6%). However, this has subsequently decreased to 26.9% in week 21. This is likely due to limited supplies of testing kits, and resulting backlogs in testing. The proportion testing positive has increased week on week in both the public and private sectors to 10.5% and 6.5% respectively in week 21. Of note, the proportion testing positive in the public sector increased from 5.7% in week 20 to 10.5% in week 21.

Table 2. Weekly number of tests conducted and positive tests, by healthcare sector, South Africa, 1 March – 23 May 2020

Week number	Week beginning	Public sector		Private sector		Public sector proportion of		Ratio of PTP ^a
		Tests	Cases n (%)	Tests	Cases n (%)	Tests (%)	Cases (%)	
10	01 Mar	283	7 (2.5)	127	1 (0.8)	69.0	87.5	3.141
11	08 Mar	377	21 (5.6)	1 888	74 (3.9)	16.6	22.1	1.421
12	15 Mar	1 409	67 (4.8)	19 533	784 (4.0)	6.7	7.9	1.185
13	22 Mar	3 426	127 (3.7)	13 312	349 (2.6)	20.5	26.7	1.414
14	29 Mar	5 683	169 (3.0)	11 166	267 (2.4)	33.7	38.8	1.244
15	05 Apr	11 445	381 (3.3)	12 668	317 (2.5)	47.5	54.6	1.330
16	12 Apr	23 803	641 (2.7)	16 811	533 (3.2)	58.6	54.6	0.849
17	19 Apr	54 408	1 541 (2.8)	19 837	473 (2.4)	73.3	76.5	1.188
18	26 Apr	65 530	2 374 (3.6)	22 361	646 (2.9)	74.6	78.6	1.254
19	03 May	73 431	3 658 (5.0)	42 122	1298 (3.1)	63.5	73.8	1.617
20	10 May	37 326	2 125 (5.7)	49 628	2192 (4.4)	42.9	49.2	1.289
21	17 May	20 856	2 181 (10.5)	56 725	3664 (6.5)	26.9	37.3	1.619
Total		29 7977	13 292 (4.5)	266 178	10 598 (4.0)	52.8	55.6	1.120

^a Ratio of proportion testing positive (PTP) in the public sector to the private sector calculated as (no. of cases/total tests in public sector)/ (no. of cases/total tests in private sector)

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Laboratory delays are indicated by an increase in the mean number of days between specimen collection and reporting of the results over the past weeks, predominantly in the public sector. The mean turnaround time in the public sector increased from 2.5 days to 8 days from week 17 to week 21 (Figure 3). The turnaround time in the private sector has remained <2 days over this same period. Among tests conducted in the public sector, the increased turnaround time has been observed in all five provinces where the largest number of tests have been conducted. However, the largest delay in testing has been observed in Gauteng Province from 4 days in week 17 to >10 days in week 21 (Figure 4). In the past week, turnaround times continued to increase in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape, while improvements in turnaround time were observed in the Western Cape. Of the 19 NHLS laboratories conducting SARS-CoV-2 testing, 16 had turnaround times >48 hours in the past week (Figure 5).

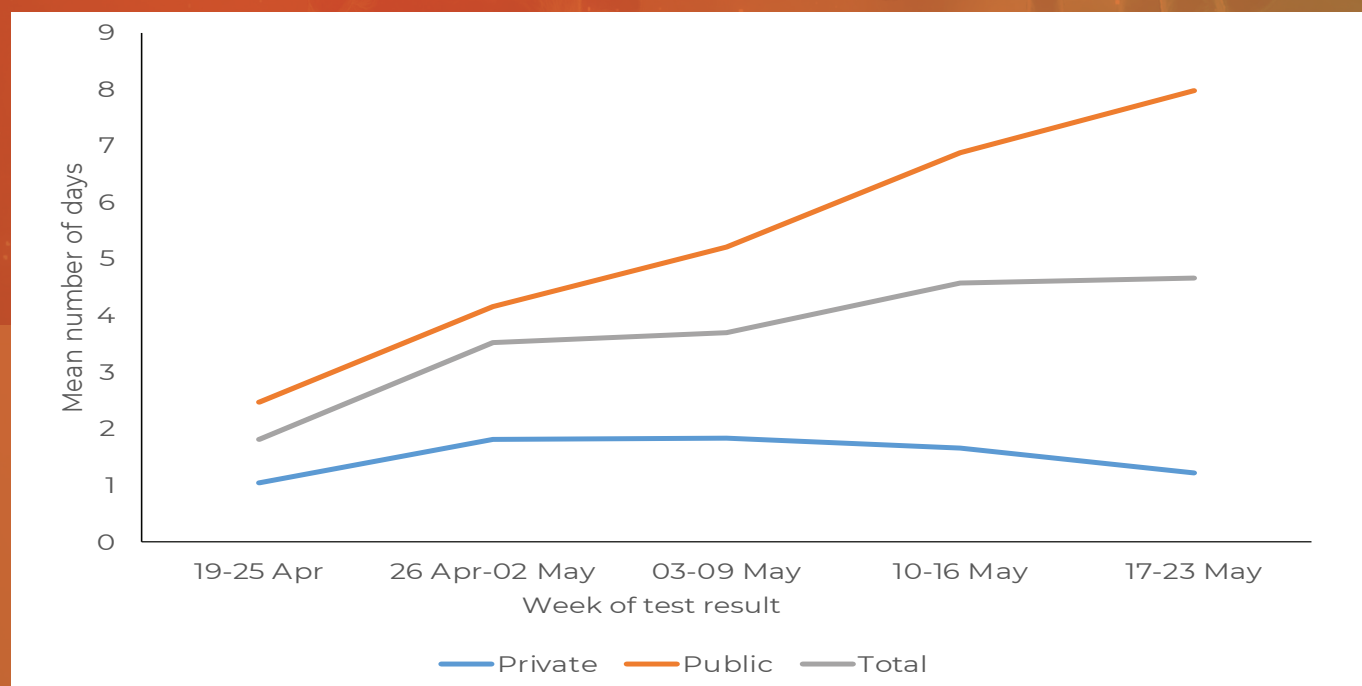


Figure 3. Mean number of days between date of specimen collection and date of test result, by week, South Africa, 19 April – 23 May 2020

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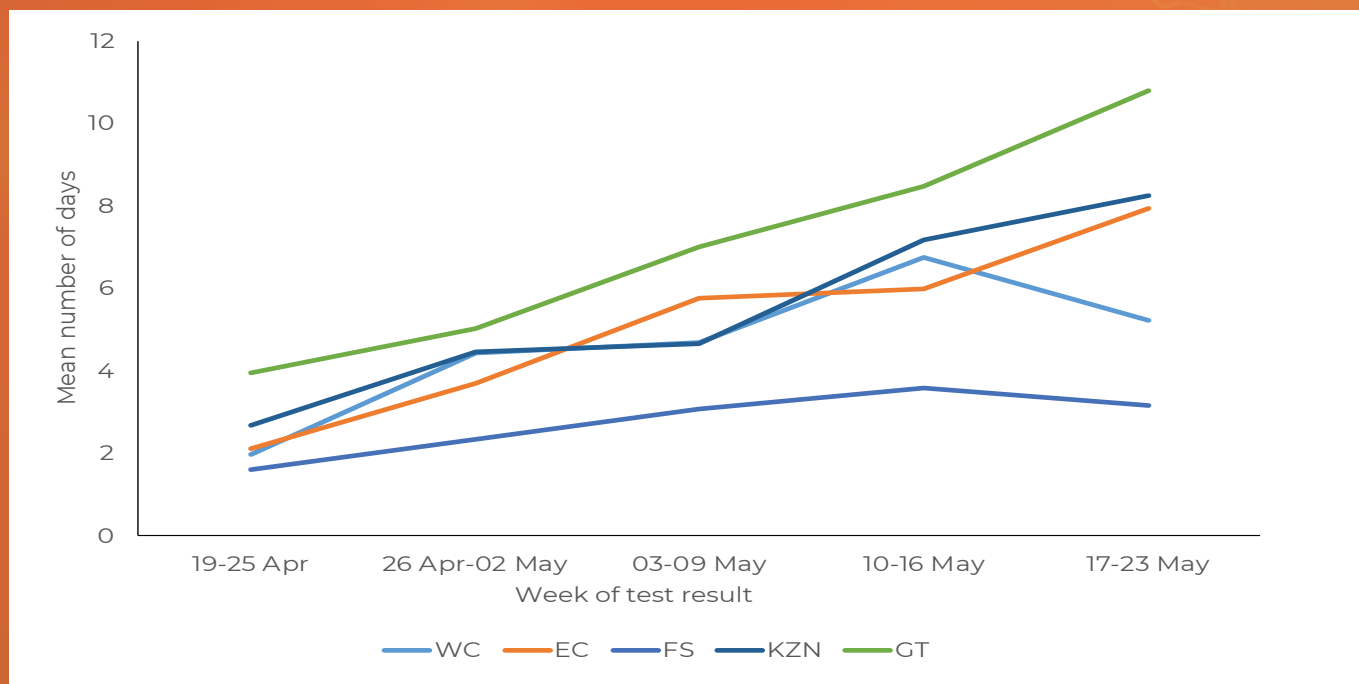


Figure 4. Mean number of days between date of specimen collection and date of test result, by week and province, South Africa, 19 April – 23 May 2020. WC, Western Cape; EC, Eastern Cape; FS, Free State; KZN, KwaZulu Natal, GT, Gauteng

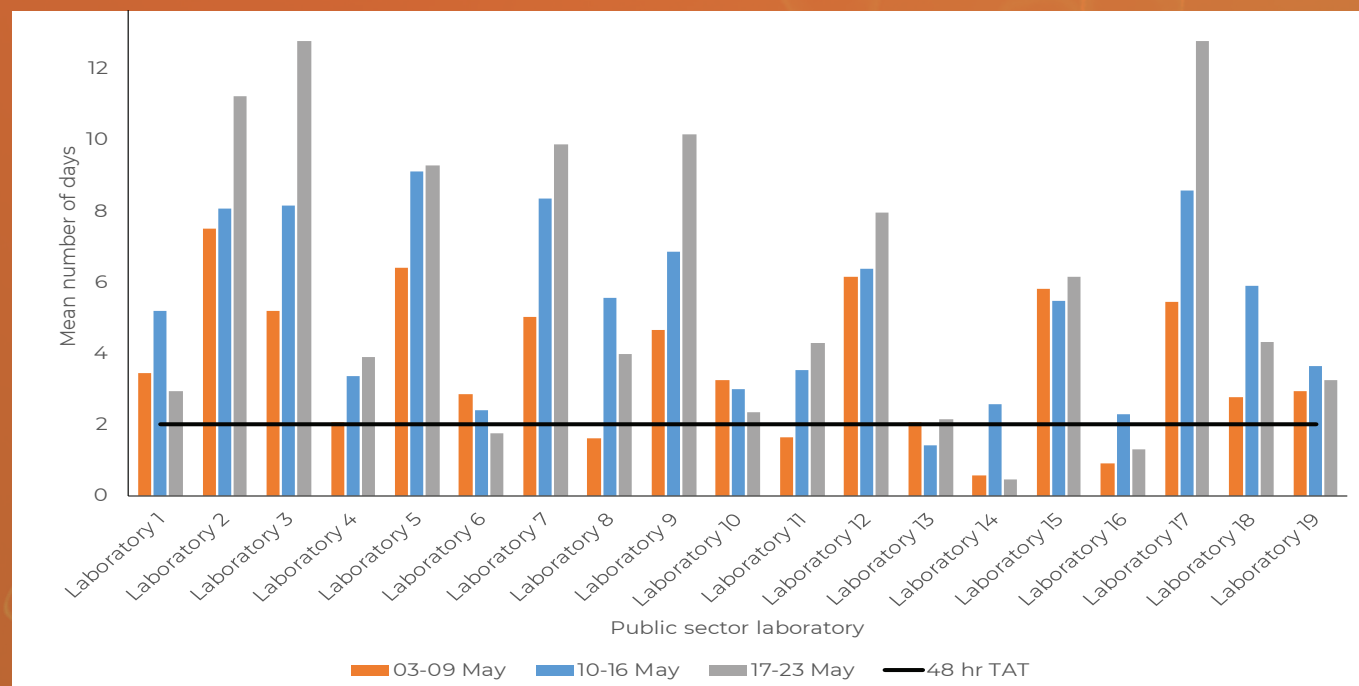


Figure 5. Mean number of days between date of specimen collection and date of test result, by public sector laboratory, 03-23 May 2020. The horizontal black line indicates 48-hour turnaround time (TAT)

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TESTING BY PROVINCE

In the past week, Western Cape, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provinces continued to perform the largest numbers of tests. The number of tests conducted in week 21 compared to the previous week decreased across the majority of provinces, except for the Western Cape province where the number of tests increased (Table 3). Western Cape (17.5%) and Eastern Cape (8.8%) provinces continued to have the highest proportion testing positive in week 21, which were higher than the previous two weeks in those provinces (Figure 6).

Table 3. Weekly number of tests performed and positive tests, by province, South Africa, 3-23 May 2020

Province	3-9 May		10-16 May		17-23 May	
	No. of tests	No. positive tests (%)	No. of tests	No. positive tests (%)	No. of tests	No. positive tests (%)
Western Cape	26 483	3 656 (13.8)	20699	3224 (15.6)	25085	4 397 (17.5)
Eastern Cape	13 016	694 (5.3)	8645	475 (5.5)	5504	486 (8.8)
Northern Cape	1 426	6 (0.4)	983	6 (0.6)	1008	6 (0.6)
Free State	4 703	7 (0.1)	4765	32 (0.7)	4333	42 (1.0)
KwaZulu-Natal	19 584	254 (1.3)	14284	181 (1.3)	11556	241 (2.1)
North West	1 874	16 (0.9)	2500	15 (0.6)	1969	33 (1.7)
Gauteng	41 948	296 (0.7)	28315	349 (1.2)	21793	383 (1.8)
Mpumalanga	3 383	13 (0.4)	3360	18 (0.5)	2900	61 (2.1)
Limpopo	2 463	12 (0.5)	2627	8 (0.3)	2403	12 (0.5)
Unknown	671	2 (0.3)	776	9 (1.2)	1030	184 (17.9)
Total	11 5551	4 956 (4.3)	8 6954	4 317 (5.0)	7 7581	5 845 (7.5)

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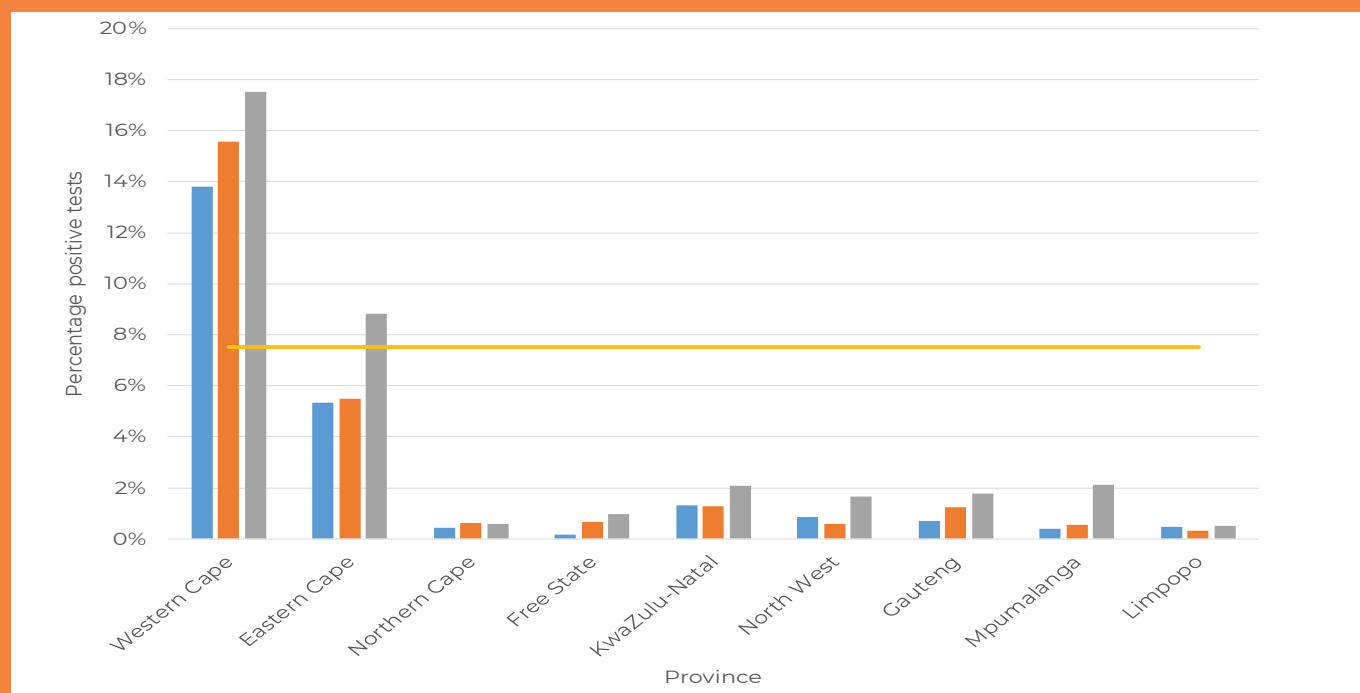


Figure 6. Weekly proportion testing positive, by province, South Africa, 3-23 May 2020. The horizontal yellow line shows the national average for week 21, beginning 17 May 2020

TESTING IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

In the public sector, the proportion testing positive remains highest in the Western Cape, and increased to 24.6% in week 21 (Table 4). The proportion testing positive was second highest in the Eastern Cape, where it increased from 5.5% in week 20 to 8.4% in week 21. The proportion testing positive in the public sector remains higher than the national average, not weighted for population size, in Western Cape Province (Figure 7).

Table 4. Weekly number of tests conducted and positive tests in the public sector, by province, South Africa, 3-23 May 2020

Province	3-9 May		10-16 May		17-23 May	
	No. of tests	No. positive tests (%)	No. of tests	No. positive tests (%)	No. of tests	No. positive tests (%)
Western Cape	15 772	2 735 (17.3)	7 363	1 662 (22.6)	7 771	1 910 (24.6)
Eastern Cape	11 311	627 (5.5)	5 412	2 95 (5.5)	1 414	119 (8.4)
Northern Cape	608	0 (0.0)	130	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)

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Free State	3 080	0 (0.0)	3114	10 (0.3)	2 439	16 (0.7)
KwaZulu-Natal	1 2525	149 (1.2)	7 639	64 (0.8)	3 796	64 (1.7)
North West	595	5 (0.8)	870	3 (0.3)	244	1 (0.4)
Gauteng	26 864	140 (0.5)	10 264	85 (0.8)	3 739	69 (1.8)
Mpumalanga	1 223	1 (0.1)	998	3 (0.3)	92	0 (0.0)
Limpopo	1 453	1 (0.1)	1 536	3 (0.2)	1 361	2 (0.1)
Total	73 431	3 658 (5.0)	37 326	2 125 (5.7)	20 856	2 181 (10.5)

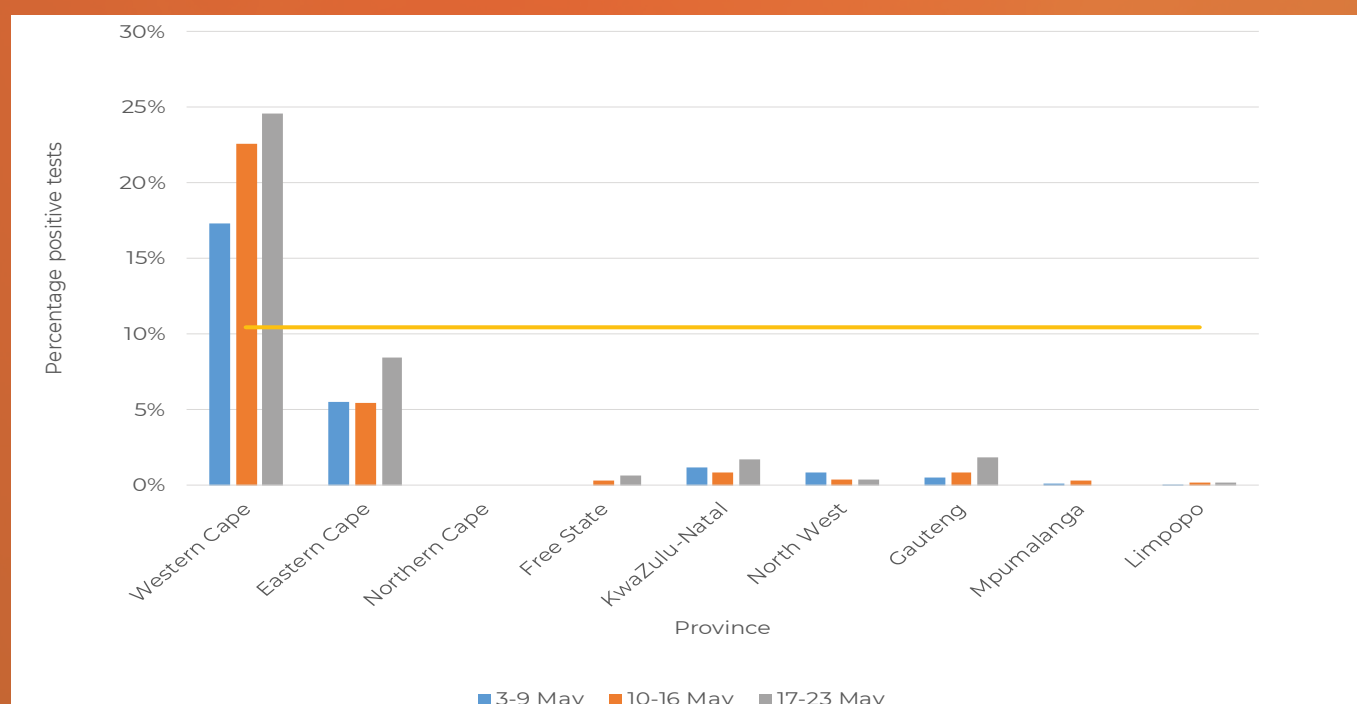


Figure 7. Weekly proportion testing positive in the public sector, by province, South Africa, 3-23 May 2020. The horizontal yellow line shows the national average for week 21, beginning 17 May 2020

There are some differences in the proportion testing positive at a provincial level between individuals attending or admitted to healthcare facilities (passive case finding), and those tested as part of the community screening and testing (CST) programme (active case finding) in the four provinces where the greatest volume of public testing has been conducted in the last week (17-23 May). The proportion of positive tests in the Western Cape and Eastern Cape was higher among individuals being tested in healthcare facilities compared to those being tested as part of the CST programme (Table 5), whereas differences were smaller in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provinces likely due to different approaches to CST in the various provinces.

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Table 5. Number of tests conducted and proportion of positive tests in the public sector by case-finding method, South Africa, 17 - 23 May 2020

Province	Healthcare facilities ^a		Community ^b	
	No. of tests	Proportion testing positive (%)	No. of tests	Proportion testing positive (%)
Western Cape	6 270	24.8	1501	23.9
Eastern Cape	918	9.5	496	6.5
KwaZulu Natal	2 639	1.6	1157	1.8
Gauteng	2 951	1.9	788	1.5

^a Individuals presenting or admitted to a healthcare facility

^b Individuals tested through community screening

PUBLIC FACILITIES WITH HIGH PROPORTIONS TESTING POSITIVE

Table 6 shows anonymised public healthcare facilities that tested >25 specimens, had ≥5 positive tests and had the highest proportion testing positive in the week of 17-23 May. Of 28 facilities, 19 are in the Western Cape, 3 in the Eastern Cape, 3 in KwaZulu-Natal and 3 in Gauteng.

Table 6. Public healthcare facilities with a high proportion testing positive, 17-23 May 2020

Facility Name	Province	Tests	PTP (95% CI)
Facility 1	Western Cape	109	0.431 (0.471;0.837)
Facility 2	Western Cape	37	0.378 (0.215;0.522)
Facility 3	Western Cape	44	0.341 (0.214;0.480)
Facility 4	Western Cape	153	0.314 (0.186;0.500)
Facility 5	Western Cape	45	0.311 (0.230;0.397)
Facility 6	Western Cape	238	0.294 (0.152;0.473)
Facility 7	Western Cape	34	0.294 (0.168;0.386)
Facility 8	Western Cape	168	0.286 (0.149;0.404)
Facility 9	Western Cape	25	0.280 (0.113;0.439)

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Facility 10	Western Cape	181	0.271 (0.141;0.404)
Facility 11	Western Cape	38	0.263 (0.228;0.305)
Facility 12	Western Cape	47	0.255 (0.197;0.322)
Facility 13	Western Cape	106	0.236 (0.124;0.349)
Facility 14	Western Cape	57	0.228 (0.126;0.340)
Facility 15	Eastern Cape	77	0.221 (0.160;0.279)
Facility 16	Western Cape	94	0.213 (0.152;0.276)
Facility 17	Eastern Cape	238	0.164 (0.136;0.267)
Facility 18	Western Cape	105	0.152 (0.103;0.297)
Facility 19	Western Cape	53	0.132 (0.043;0.357)
Facility 20	KwaZulu-Natal	46	0.109 (0.135;0.242)
Facility 21	Western Cape	258	0.109 (0.033;0.300)
Facility 22	Western Cape	157	0.089 (0.045;0.288)
Facility 23	Gauteng	423	0.089 (0.025;0.245)
Facility 24	KwaZulu-Natal	62	0.081 (0.059;0.173)
Facility 25	Gauteng	256	0.078 (0.047;0.124)
Facility 26	Eastern Cape	114	0.044 (0.025;0.146)
Facility 27	Gauteng	154	0.039 (0.054;0.114)
Facility 28	KwaZulu-Natal	189	0.037 (0.038;0.109)

95% CI: 95% confidence interval; PTP: positive test proportion

Table 7 shows anonymised facilities associated with community screening that tested >25 specimens, had ≥5 positive tests and had the highest proportion testing positive in the week of 17-23 May. Six of the 9 facilities are in the Western Cape, 2 in KwaZulu-Natal and 1 in the Eastern Cape.

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Table 7. Public facilities associated with the community screening and testing programme with a high proportion testing positive, 17-23 May 2020

Facility Name	Province	Tests	PTP (95% CI)
Facility 1	Western Cape	40	0.375 (0.225;0.525)
Facility 2	Western Cape	44	0.341 (0.201;0.481)
Facility 3	Western Cape	27	0.222 (0.065;0.379)
Facility 4	Western Cape	78	0.179 (0.094;0.265)
Facility 5	Western Cape	84	0.143 (0.068;0.218)
Facility 6	Western Cape	44	0.136 (0.035;0.238)
Facility 7	Eastern Cape	47	0.106 (0.018;0.195)
Facility 8	KwaZulu-Natal	144	0.076 (0.033;0.12)
Facility 9	KwaZulu-Natal	170	0.041 (0.011;0.071)

95% CI: 95% confidence interval; PTP: positive test proportion

PUBLIC TESTING: HEALTH DISTRICT-LEVEL RESULTS

Table 8 shows health sub-districts with high adjusted proportion testing positive for the week of 17-23 May, from both public healthcare facilities and community screening. The adjusted positive test proportion exceeded 20% in 11 districts and health sub-districts in the Western Cape, and exceeded 10% in eight districts spread across the Western and Eastern Cape, the Free State and KwaZulu-Natal (Figure 8 and Figure 9). The proportion testing positive increased significantly in two districts and health sub-districts in the Western Cape (CT Klipfontein, and Theewaterskloof) as well as in the Johannesburg B subdistrict. Two of Nelson Mandela Bay's health sub-districts are also represented in the list, although the proportion testing positive has remained constant or decreased.

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Table 8. Health sub-districts with a high proportion testing positive based on public sector data for the week of 17-23 May

Health district or sub-district	Province	PTP (95% CI)	Previous week
CT Khayelitsha	Western Cape	0.348 (0.294-0.402)	0.349 (0.301-0.397)
CT Klipfontein	Western Cape	0.337 (0.283-0.392)	0.218 (0.174-0.262)
Stellenbosch	Western Cape	0.318 (0.123-0.514)	0.081 (0.000-0.234)
Theewaterskloof	Western Cape	0.280 (0.133-0.426)	0.042 (0.000-0.124)
CT Tygerberg	Western Cape	0.278 (0.255-0.301)	0.279 (0.253-0.306)
Drakenstein	Western Cape	0.262 (0.200-0.324)	0.174 (0.125-0.224)
CT Mitchells Plain	Western Cape	0.258 (0.232-0.284)	0.293 (0.260-0.326)
CT Eastern	Western Cape	0.240 (0.184-0.297)	0.231 (0.188-0.274)
CT Southern	Western Cape	0.227 (0.205-0.249)	0.214 (0.189-0.239)
Breede Valley	Western Cape	0.222 (0.147-0.297)	0.127 (0.064-0.189)
CT Western	Western Cape	0.218 (0.198-0.238)	0.222 (0.203-0.240)
Umtshezi	KwaZulu-Natal	0.188 (0.020-0.356)	0.040 (0.000-0.118)
Saldanha Bay	Western Cape	0.185 (0.069-0.301)	0.236 (0.148-0.325)
Nelson Mandela Bay B	Eastern Cape	0.160 (0.051-0.269)	0.057 (0.016-0.099)
King Sabata Dalindyebo	Eastern Cape	0.138 (0.087-0.188)	0.123 (0.093-0.153)
CT Northern	Western Cape	0.137 (0.079-0.194)	0.265 (0.157-0.373)
Baviaans	Eastern Cape	0.136 (0.000-0.280)	0.027 (0.000-0.058)
Kopanong	Free State	0.120 (0.029-0.210)	0.043 (0.012-0.075)
Witzenberg	Western Cape	0.118 (0.028-0.207)	0.110 (0.042-0.178)
Bitou	Western Cape	0.092 (0.000-0.215)	...
Swartland	Western Cape	0.089 (0.000-0.206)	0.118 (0.021-0.215)
Knysna	Western Cape	0.087 (0.035-0.140)	0.088 (0.025-0.150)
Nelson Mandela Bay C	Eastern Cape	0.087 (0.064-0.109)	0.051 (0.038-0.064)
Mbhashe	Eastern Cape	0.078 (0.018-0.139)	...
Overstrand	Western Cape	0.078 (0.004-0.151)	...
Tlokwe City Council	NorthWest	0.065 (0.000-0.188)	...
Lukanji	Eastern Cape	0.050 (0.000-0.117)	0.179 (0.130-0.229)

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Buffalo City	Eastern Cape	0.049 (0.020-0.077)	0.044 (0.033-0.055)
KwaDukuza	KwaZulu-Natal	0.047 (0.010-0.084)	0.048 (0.029-0.067)
Bela-Bela	Limpopo	0.045 (0.000-0.132)	
Langeberg	Western Cape	0.044 (0.000-0.127)	0.096 (0.000-0.223)
Ekurhuleni North 1	Gauteng	0.035 (0.007-0.063)	0.035 (0.015-0.054)
Johannesburg B	Gauteng	0.033 (0.019-0.047)	0.009 (0.004-0.014)
George	Western Cape	0.031 (0.000-0.067)	0.027 (0.000-0.064)

95% CI: 95% confidence interval; PTP: adjusted positive test proportion; CT: Cape Town; bold font indicates current week proportions that are significantly higher than the previous week

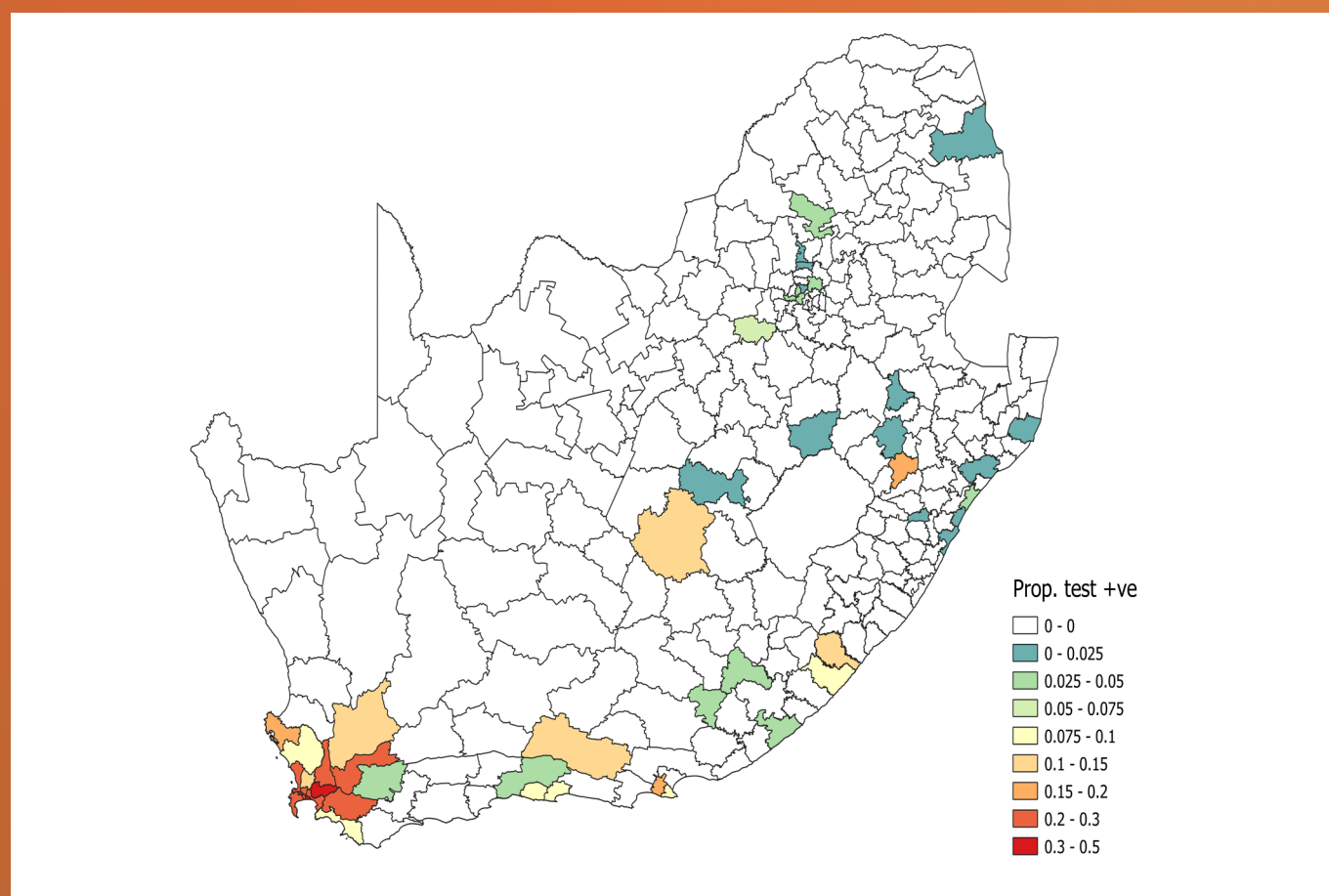


Figure 8. Proportion testing positive by health sub-district based on public sector data for the week of 17-23 May, South Africa

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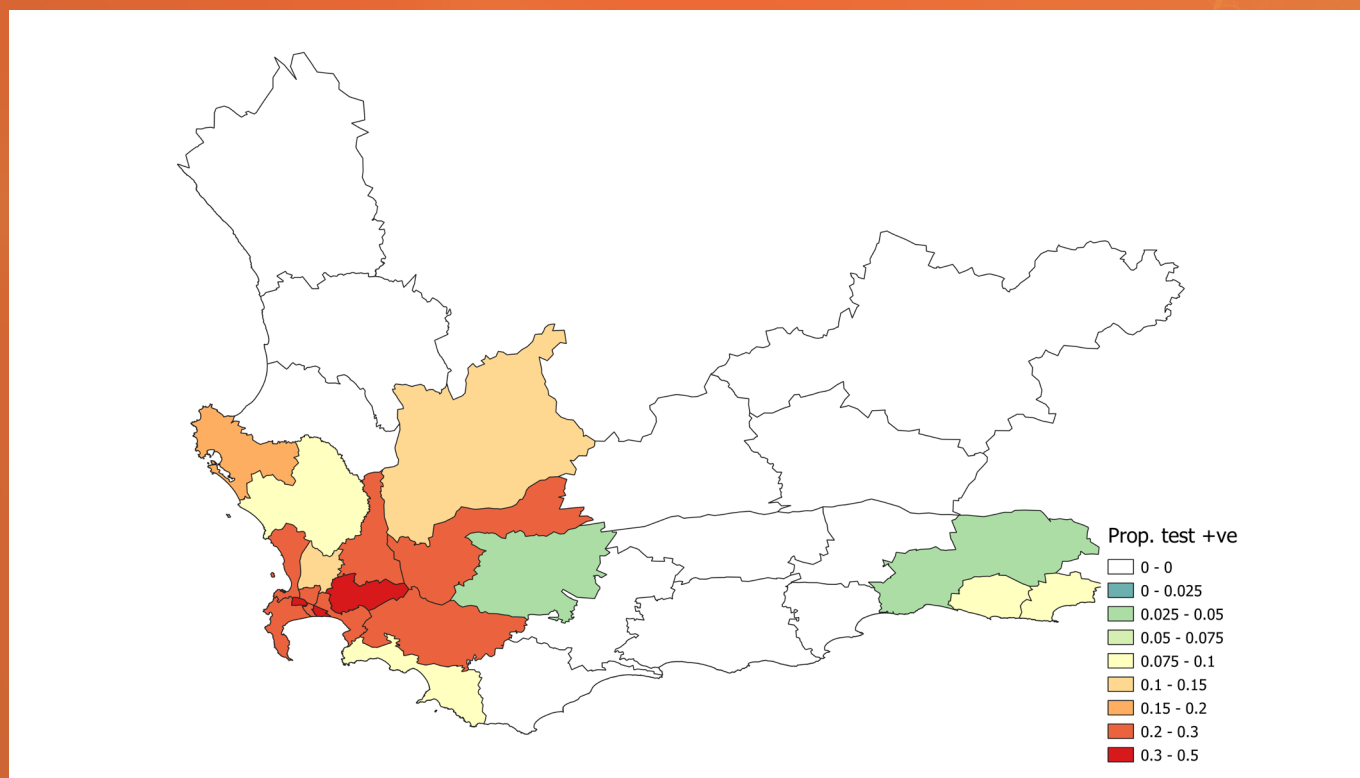


Figure 9. Health sub-districts in the Western Cape Province with a high proportion testing positive based on public sector data for the week of 17-23 May

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF INDIVIDUALS TESTED

The mean age of individuals tested has remained stable over the last four weeks. However, the mean age of cases has increased from 38.3 to 40.7 for males and from 37.5 to 40.6 for females from week 18 to 21. The sex ratio (the number of males per 100 females) of individuals tested and cases has increased in the past week: in week 21 for every 100 females tested 81 males were tested, and for every 100 female cases there were 77 male cases (Table 9). For both males and females, the proportion testing positive increased across all age groups in week 21 compared to week 20 (Figure 10).

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Table 9. Mean age and sex ratio of individuals tested, South Africa, 26 April – 23 May 2020

Week number	Week beginning	Mean age of tested (years)		Mean age of cases (years)		Sex ratios (males / 100 females)	
		Males	Females	Males	Females	Tested	Cases
18	26 Apr	41.5	42.2	38.3	37.5	85.2	65.9
19	3 May	41.7	41.5	38.0	37.9	74.4	70.4
20	10 May	41.8	41.8	40.3	41.5	77.2	70.6
21	17 May	41.6	41.3	40.7	40.6	81.2	77.1

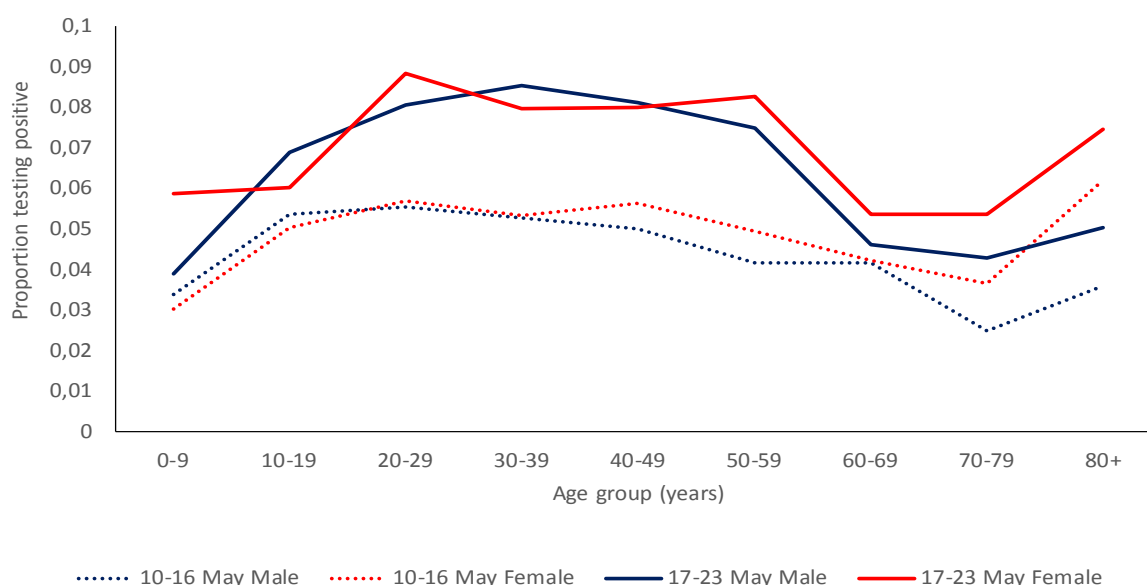


Figure 10. Weekly proportion testing positive by age group and sex, South Africa, 10-23 May 2020

In the past week, as in the previous 3 weeks, the proportion testing positive was higher among females compared to males (Table 10). The proportion testing positive was highest in the 20-39 and 40-59-year age groups for both males and females.

COVID-19 TESTING SUMMARY

WEEK 21 2020

Table 10. Proportion testing positive by sex and week, South Africa, 26 April – 23 May 2020

Age (years)	26 April – 2 May		3-9 May		10-16 May		17-23 May	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
0-19	3.6%	4.1%	4.3%	4.2%	4.1%	3.9%	5.3%	6.1%
20-39	3.4%	4.9%	5.3%	5.4%	5.4%	5.5%	8.3%	8.3%
40-59	2.9%	3.6%	3.7%	3.9%	4.7%	5.4%	7.8%	8.1%
60-69	1.6%	1.8%	2.6%	2.6%	4.4%	4.3%	5.3%	5.8%
70+	1.7%	1.5%	2.0%	2.3%	2.8%	4.5%	4.5%	5.9%
Total	3.0%	3.8%	4.1%	4.4%	4.7%	5.2%	7.3%	7.7%

LIMITATIONS

- The backlog in testing of samples by public laboratories will affect the reported numbers of tests performed
- If higher-priority specimens were tested preferentially, this would likely result in an inflated proportion testing positive
- The delays in laboratory testing affects the analysis of the testing data and identification of outbreak hotspots
- Different testing strategies (targeted vs. mass testing) used by different provinces makes percentage testing positive difficult to interpret and compare
- Health district and sub-district level results included public-sector data only and were mapped based on the testing facility and not place of residence

CONCLUSIONS

The overall proportion testing positive increased to 7.5% in week 21, with increases observed in both the public and private sectors. The increased proportion testing positive was observed across all age groups, in both males and females. Western Cape (17.5%) and Eastern Cape (8.8%) provinces continue to have the highest proportion testing positive. Limited availability of testing kits and influx of specimens from the CST programme has resulted in an increase in laboratory turnaround time, predominantly in the public sector. This impacts the analysis of testing data as results for a portion of samples collected in the past week are not yet reflected in this report.